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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
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JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
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USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE  
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COMUSNAVEUR LONDON UK  
COMLANTFLT NORFOLK VA  
HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE  
SAFE WASHINGTON DC  
USNMR SHAPE BE  
ODC ANKARA TU  
CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ2/ECJ5-E//  
USEUCOM AIDES VAIHINGEN GE  
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CINC INTEL SUPPORT HEIDELBERG GE//AEAGB-C-RE/AEAGC//  
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SUBJECT: SHIP VISIT TO CYPRUS: CALLING IN THE NORTH IS A  
BAD IDEA

REF: IIR 689801035

Classified By: Ambassador M. Klosson, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY. Embassy Nicosia supports a visit by the USN to the Republic of Cyprus (south), but opposes a ship visit to north Cyprus under the current circumstances. The Republic of Cyprus has hosted many visits by the United States Navy (USN) over the years without incident. The Cyprus government has been supportive of these visits, which have enabled the US military to maintain its presence in the region while supporting the Combatant Commander's Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) strategy. The Republic of Cyprus is ideally suited to support USN visits in terms of port infrastructure, support architecture, and security. The US Embassy is in a position to provide the necessary support, as well as leverage the events to further support the U.S. government's goals and policies for Cyprus. A USN visit to north Cyprus, on the other hand, would do little to help ease the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community, and would have a significant negative impact on areas of key policy cooperation with Cyprus -- such as counter-terrorism and non-proliferation cooperation, including halting negotiations close to agreement on a PSI shipboarding MOU. Furthermore, the north is ill suited to support such visits. Security/Force Protection, port infrastructure, support

architecture, and personal security are all questionable at best. A USN visit would highlight the Turkish military presence because the TGS would likely be heavily involved in many aspects of the visit. END SUMMARY.

#### BACKGROUND ON USN VISITS TO CYPRUS

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12. (C) The Republic of Cyprus has been the beneficiary without incident of USN ship visits for the past 14 years. Since 1999, Cyprus has hosted 40 visits, 34 prior to 9/11, and 6 since with approximately another 10 non-routine visits (medevac). In all, since 1991, Cyprus hosted 72 ship visits by the USN. As recently as March 2004, NAVEUR Headquarters London listed Cyprus as one of the top ten countries to conduct ship visits in support of European Command's Theater Security Cooperation Strategy. These visits are an integral engagement strategy for Cyprus, country campaign plan (CCP), recently developed to maintain access to the region, build relationships to curb the flow of illegal goods and services, and support the counter-proliferation efforts in the region. No country has protested the USN's right to conduct these visits, and all have occurred with little to no fanfare. In addition, France, India, Greece, and the UK have conducted ship visits without incident. No U.S. or other non-Turkish naval vessels have visited the north since 1974.

#### VISITING THE SOUTH: POLITICALLY HELPFUL AND EASY TO DO

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3.(C) A USN ship visit to the south would directly advance our non-proliferation and counter-terrorism objectives. A ship visit to the south would signal that, while we will press ahead with our policy of easing the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots, cooperation in other areas of interest to both sides will continue.

14. (C) From an infrastructure standpoint, the Republic of Cyprus is ideally suited to support a USN Ship visit. Both of its main seaports have been inspected by the US Navy and have a current port inspection survey on file (PIVA). As a result of the previous history of USN visits, the support architecture is in place to support a variety of sea going vessels to include submarines. Husbanding agents have supported everything from Carrier Strike Groups on exercises in the eastern Mediterranean, to Expeditionary Strike Groups conducting humanitarian assistance measures for earthquake victims, to Presidential Summit meetings between the U.S. and the Soviet Union on Malta. The USG, through an exchange of diplomatic notes with the Republic of Cyprus, has a SOFA-like agreement to protect military personnel in the event that legal issues arise as a result of liberty visits. Everything is in place to resume successful ship visits to the Republic of Cyprus.

#### VISITING THE NORTH: IMPRACTICAL AND ...

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15. (C) While the south is well suited to host a USN Ship visit, north Cyprus is not. Port facilities are well below what is available, and already certified, in the south. Access to the institutions that would support such a visit is difficult. The lack of a recognized local political entity poses significant coordination difficulties; for example, SOFA-like protection of military personnel arranged via the exchange of diplomatic notes would be impossible in the north. Security/force protection is also a questionable area, and would unhelpfully highlight Turkey's extensive presence and interference in the north. Husbanding agents are currently unknown and untested. As a result, the ability of the Embassy to support a ship visit is limited at best.

#### ... A COLOSSAL POLICY BLUNDER

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16. (C) A USN visit to the north would also have a disastrous effect on key U.S. interests in Cyprus and would provoke an

unprecedented firestorm of Greek Cypriot protest. Such a

visit would require, by definition, intimate cooperation with the Turkish military in north Cyprus, which is considered an army of "occupation" by the GOC and whose presence in Cyprus has been condemned repeatedly by UNSC resolutions. Greece, a new UNSC member, would certainly raise the issue in the Council. Perhaps more importantly, the ROC would respond immediately by stopping cooperation in policy areas of importance to the United States, including but not limited to:

-- Counterterrorism and non-proliferation. The USG is close to finalizing a PSI shipboarding agreement with the Government of Cyprus that would improve oversight of the busy seaports in the south. The GOC would come under significant pressure to reject cooperation with forces that had &legitimized8 the Turkish &occupation8 by visiting the north.

-- Bicommunalism. The GOC is already threatening to pull out of long-standing bicommunal programs, including Fulbright scholarships. A ship visit would push the GOC to be more aggressive in undermining bicommunal activity.

-- UN Settlement Process. A ship visit would further damage U.S. credibility among Greek Cypriots and harm our ability to press for a more constructive Greek Cypriot position on renewing UN settlement talks.

17. (C) Furthermore, a USN ship visit would provide very little concrete, long-term benefit to the Turkish Cypriots -- especially if it rendered USG help to their community more difficult. A port call by a U.S. military asset is a symbolic gesture that would actually work against our efforts to provide substantive assistance to the Turkish Cypriots. A ship visit in no way advances the most important priorities we share with the pro-settlement Turkish Cypriot leadership: laying the ground for a Cyprus settlement by ending north Cyprus, isolation from international trade, and encouraging the sustainable development of their economic and business infrastructure. North Cyprus needs freighters, not frigates.

COMMENT

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18. (C) Previous ship visits to the south have been non-problematic, and another visit to the south would help advance U.S. policy priorities with the GOC. A visit to the north would be both impractical and politically disastrous in the current climate. END COMMENT.

KLOSSON